1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

136 delicate little *Hajojo* which resembles a flying squirrel, and which makes the prettiest if not always the most docile of pets. There are many more bush creatures perfectly known to Papuan (if not so well to European) zoology, and all, while they serve the more utilitarian purpose of diet, are especially interesting because their names constantly recur in the Aesopian legends with which Orokaiva folk-lore abounds.

136 Reptiles are not less common than in other parts of the
825 Territory. Snakes, from the python to the smallest and deadliest, are regarded with a queer mixture of feelings in which sometimes veneration, sometimes horror, and sometimes hunger gains the upper hand. The lizard is killed,
[251] its flesh dried in the smoke against some future feast, and its skin stretched over the drum as a tympanum. Crocodiles, the most terrible of the Papuan's natural enemies, abound near the river-mouths, and their attacks have sometimes been so frequent on village pigs and dogs and on women filling their gourds at the water's edge, that favourable settlements have had to be abandoned. Yet even the crocodile is often outwitted in the legends and occasionally caught and eaten in reality.

Flying-foxes or fruit-bats are numerous and destructive. From their camping-grounds, where they hang by day in lazy myriads from the branches, they steadily wing their way at evening to the gardens which they mean to plunder, and after this nocturnal migration may be seen steadily beating back at earliest daybreak. To the Orokaiva as to ourselves there is a hint of the spectral about the flying-fox, and it is not surprising that it should find a place in their legends and theories of the life after death.

136 Birds are of interest to the northern native mainly as
30 providing the plumes which, fastened together in head-
231 dresses, make him, as they are meant to do, more attractive in love and more terrifying in war. Thus parrots, kingfishers, and birds of paradise supply in their brilliant plumage one of the principal kinds of convertible wealth. The domestic cock is valued for the same reason, being mercilessly plucked and bereft of his sweeping tail feathers in

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

241 clearing and protects it more or less effectively against the bush-pigs. Until the whole circuit of this fence is completed it is necessary for some people to live temporarily in the garden, where a smoking fire and an occasional shout are sufficient to scare away the intruders. Sometimes a man will lie in wait by moonlight hoping to spear a pig among his taro, which is a dangerous game and results in many casualties. The various traps and snares which are meant for pigs and others spoliators of the garden will be described under Hunting.

There is little to say concerning the harvesting. A woman gathers from time to time enough for her family's immediate wants, and the taro tops will be replanted. There are thus a number of plots at different stages of advancement in every woman's garden. Sometimes, however, when all the gardens of a clan are well stocked, there will be a simultaneous harvesting to furnish forth a feast. The products of the garden are then loaded ostentatiously upon platforms in the village before their final distribution to the guests.

● 251 [784] Coco-nuts are placed under a tabu when a large feast is pending and, as they fall, are accumulated in long lines on the ground, or else strung to poles set up as a tall pyramid in the centre of the village. In the southern part of the division yams are kept in a *barasi* or yam-house, the actual repository being a small dark attic under the gabled roof, while the lower story, merely a raised platform, is used as a sitting-place. Only two other methods of food-storage are worth mentioning. *Tauga* nuts are strung together on poles and suspended over the house fires, where they become black and dry; and *Puga* nuts are concealed in holes in creeks, where the moving water in the course of several months purges away their poisonous properties.

Hunting

224 262 Although hunting is only a secondary phase of the food quest, the hunter is distinguished by some skill and ingenuity, by a remarkable keenness for meat, and by a very sensible catholicity of taste. Bush-pigs, wallabies—of the bush and of the grass-lands—rats, birds, lizards, frogs, and

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

342 [177] village scuffles. The old-fashioned house has been for the most part replaced by the 'European' model. This does not always mean any great change, save that the new house is loftier and airier and frequently possesses an annexe or 'kitchen' which seems as a rule to serve any purpose but a culinary one. But the general improvement is undeniable. The true native dwellings of the Orokaiva were so poor that W. E. Armit, an early resident magistrate, described them as 'miserable little things, small ramshackle erections', and referred to an Opi village as 'a collection of squalid hovels'.[1]

The original Orokaiva house (*mande*) is oblong and very low. The floor proper (*gaga*) is raised on piles, but the space beneath is roughly walled in so as to form a closed compartment called *su*. Above the floor proper there is often an interior platform or shelf (*babari*) forming, as it were, a third story under the slope of the roof, but as a rule only along one side of the house, so that it resembles a sleeping-berth more than anything else. The ridged roof is so low that a man cannot stand upright on the *gaga*. The essential part of the whole structure is the *gaga*. This is built first on strong piles of its own, and then the roof supports and the walls are built around it independently save for bindings of split cane. In some cases, indeed, the walls are wholly separate from the *gaga*, which is enclosed as it were in a box. The piles and main posts are of various hard-woods, but the other timbers are soft and far from durable. The walls of the true native house consist of rails or logs laid horizontally, but in the more modern style their place has been taken by branch-midribs of the sago palm set vertically. The thatching is of sago leaf.

The interior of the house is dark, warm, and smoky. It contains a variety of pots, wood bowls, string bags, pig-nets, water calabashes, and other domestic paraphernalia; [251] maybe several bags of *Puga* nuts, blocks of sago, and drying *Tauga* nuts attached to poles and suspended under the ridge-[252] pole. Cooking is done out of doors in fine weather, and at other times underneath the house in the *su*. In cold weather

[1] *Annual Report*, 1899–1900, pp. 90; 87.

In cold weather the fire burns all night through, and in the ascending heat and smoke the family sleeps warm and grimily, the householder on the *babari*,[1] his wife and family on the *gaga*,[2] and his pigs and dogs in the *su*.[3] Under the constant influence of the rising smoke the interior of the house acquires a curious metallic polish, and the poles of the roof become coated with a black lichen of soot. Conflagrations are rarer than one would expect under the circumstances.

Miscellaneous Buildings

The men's house is called *oro*. If built in connexion with a ceremony and intended as a male club-house or what might be termed a concert-hall, the men's house is called specifically *arijo*; it will occupy a central position and be of more pretentious size—say 40 feet long; and it may boast some decoration in the form of frayed sago leaf hanging in fringes from the eaves. These *arijo* houses are not seen very frequently. A peculiar feature of one or two of them is an outward-sloping wall, which gives the edifice the contours of an oblong haystack. The ordinary *oro*, which is simply the regular domicile of the young bachelors, may be small and without any distinctive feature.

A mere roofless platform is sometimes to be seen as a place of social intercourse. Among the southern tribes it is more usually combined with the picturesque little *barau* or yam-house, in which a small attic compartment above is the repository for the sprouting yams.

The Orokaiva, a true *improvisatore*, will find the materials for a house at a moment's notice. Overtaken by bad weather or benighted on the road, he will turn aside, fell a few saplings, make a selection of palm or wild banana leaves for thatch, and construct a lean-to or penthouse with a raised floor and a tolerably water-tight roof. A common trick of extempore construction is to use a slanting strut so tied to the upright that its upper end projects and thus forms a rest for a piece of cross-timber. See Plate XIV*b*.

Of tree houses (*savai*), which were formerly common enough, I have seen no evidence in the whole Division,

[1] [i.e. an interior platform or shelf above the floor—Analyst]
[2] [i.e. the floor proper—Analyst]
[3] [i.e. walled in space beneath the floor.—Analyst]

1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

(b) Coco-nuts stored under Tabu

(a) The *Naterari* or Tabu Post

PLATE XXI

778
251
778

[facing p. 116]

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

be accompanied by her husband they will probably return together about noon, he with his axe, knife, and spears over his shoulders, she, a few paces behind, bending forward under a weight of taro, greens, and firewood, her immensely distended string bag hanging over her back from a band across her sweating forehead, while the counter-balance of a sleeping baby in another string bag may hang before her. A small prick-eared dog trots alongside, and as the larger and more aggressive animal that accompanies the white man comes into view, she will (to avoid the possibility of conflict) contrive in some manner to sink down and gather the extra burden of a dog into her arms.

Replanting goes on from time to time, and the successive plots may be marked off by log boundaries (*tani*). The period of greatest activity is perhaps about the beginning of the North-West season, when more abundant rain can be counted on, and when the whole clan may be engaged in planting out the offsets, or *bere*. But there is no seasonable rule, and *bere* may be transplanted into damp localities in the middle of a dry spell. Indeed, one man complained that a term of three months in the district jail had coincided with such a dry spell, and he had actually lost all his offsets for lack of transplanting.

The fact that there is never real famine and that scarcity is a rare thing, brings about an attitude of mind which we might call improvidence. Yams are stored where they are grown; so also are *Tauga* nuts and *Puga*. But the two former are not common except in the south of the Division. Beyond these, and of course the coconut, the native puts by no vegetable food. When a feast is preparing, the taro will be gathered in great quantities and stacked on platforms. Some is eaten at the feast, some distributed with a great display of cordiality to the guests, who take it home. There is no method of preserving taro, and sometimes, when a feast is for any reason delayed, a great deal of food may deteriorate and become inedible.

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

The storing of yams is in the *haraa* or yam-houses, seen commonly in many of the southern villages of the division. The *haraa* usually takes the form of a small platform sheltered by a gabled roof in which there is a sort of attic. The platform is simply a place of social intercourse; the attic is the storehouse for yams. It is closed at either end, and thus dry and dark. When the yams are sprouting it is time for replanting.

Tauga (or *Okari*) are a very valuable asset, though I believe they are rare among the Aiga and the river people. In Wasida one may commonly see horizontal poles upon which are tied the large nuts, closely packed together. These poles are suspended across the fires, where they acquire a glossy blackness in the continual smoke. The shell is hard and has to be broken with one stone upon another. When one sees a stone embedded in the ground with a small hollow worn on the top, it is probably no more than a *Tauga*-breaking stone.

The fruit of the cycad *Puga* has to be immersed in running water for several months before it is edible. A man will take you down to some dark overgrown little stream, remove a stone from the bed, and reveal a nest of *Puga* nuts, from which the poison is slowly soaking away. When ready for eating the shell contains a brown pulpy material, strong flavoured, and highly appreciated in cookery.

Coco-nuts are accumulated, under strict taboo, for a feast. The huge coco-nut-laden tripod in the centre of the village, or the long lines of dry nuts on the ground, indicate that there is some entertainment pending towards which all the villagers will contribute. Sometimes one may see the tragedy of a feast over-long delayed and the nuts sprouting head high, too far gone to eat and perhaps too far gone to plant.

Certain other products might well enough lend themselves to storing or preservative treatment, though we need not be surprised that the native has made few essays in this direction. There is no dried sago; no banana

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

251 flour; no pounded maize; no tapioca. The two latter products, maize and maniota, are very recent introductions; the two former are, in most places, so regular and abundant as not to need preserving.

7. *Garden Magic*

241 789 It would be possible to digress too widely upon the subject of garden magic, but no description of the gardener's methods would be complete without a reference to those processes which in our eyes are magic, but in his are common sense.

We have seen that he has no real knowledge of fertilizing, but nevertheless he makes continual use of magical fertilizers. Into the hole prepared for the taro he may drop a fragment of some leaf before planting. Such leaves, called *ba sivo*, 'taro medicine', are of many and various kinds. There is in fact a particular plant which goes by the name of *Ba-sivo*, but any other leaf which will promote a vigorous growth of the taro is, *ipso facto*, *ba sivo*. The knowledge of some is common property, others are secret; all are of course magical and useless.

The justification for their use, so far as it is made explicit, appears to have resided originally in a point of resemblance. Thus, for instance, one reliable *ba sivo* was said to be *Iori babiva*. This is in fact a strong flourishing plant that grows by the water, much larger and ranker than the taro, but possessing a sufficient resemblance to it in leaf and stalk. It is felt that a fragment of *Iori babiva*, planted together with the taro, will make the latter grow like the former, which the gardener, with more of hope than of reasoned confidence, has set it for a model. So we find the leaf of a large tree like *Boruga* used for *ba sivo*. The idea is not exactly that the taro will 'wax a great tree', but simply that it will grow strongly. A *kai-sivo*, or yam medicine, was, on the same principle—if we can use that word for such a hazy mental association—a certain vigorous trailing plant called *Hupo*.

There is a more elementary form of magic than this